Tectonic Shifts and Putin's Russia in the New Security Environment

Lieutenant Colonel Jacob W. Kipp, U.S. Army, Retired

AS THE U.S. Government mobilizes for homeland defense and a protracted war against terrorism, it is evident to the Russian national security elite that fundamental features of the international security landscape are undergoing "tectonic shifts."[1] Such shifts, as described by diplomatic historian John Gaddis, involve the process of globalization, the decline of the power of the nation-state, and emerging nonstate actors with the will and means to challenge the international system's stability.[2] History did not end with the cold war, but it does assert a new set of fault lines. The current revolution in the international security system cannot be understood in isolation. In the case of U.S.-Russian relations, there have been two seismic shocks in only 2 years. The first, during spring 1999, was associated with NATO's intervention in Kosovo that ended the post-cold war era and any illusions of a U.S.-Russian partnership. The second occurred in the aftermath of 11 September 2001 and the initiation of the war on terrorism. The first shock pushed the United States and Russia apart on key security issues; the second drew them together as allies.

The Postmodern Russian Military: Post-Soviet and Post-Yeltsin

During spring 1999, this author wrote about a dying Russian military whose chronic problems remain numerous and deep.[3] Low morale and the military's diminished status in society broke the link between the nation and the armed forces. A top-heavy officer corps with too many senior officers and too few junior officers fed stagnation and inertia. A conscript pool based on a small portion of eligible age cohort, drawn from the lower strata of Russian youth, brought health and social problems into the ranks. Barracks life, with its brutal hazing, caused suicides among recruits. Criminalization and corruption throughout the officer corps undermined self-respect and public confidence. Grossly inadequate training reduced the force's combat effectiveness. A decade of barely procuring new weapons and the problem of looming block obsolescence in the first years of the next century precluded modernizing the force. The officer corps' open disdain for and distrust of the current government created a dying military.

As an acute observer notes, their inability to deal with their own decline into chaos and disorder has gone hand in hand with a remarkable fact of their marginalization in Russian national politics. Disgruntled officers perceive themselves as sheep going to the slaughter.[4] Each time the sheep complain of starvation, the political shepherds respond with another round of cuts in manpower and wage arrears. One of Boris Yeltsin's government's most vocal critics, Colonel Viktor Baranets, uses precisely that language to describe Russia's "lost army."[5] During spring 1998, the much-publicized film, "Chistilishche" ("Purgatory"), which was written and directed by nationalist journalist Aleksandr Nevzorov and produced by oligarch Boris Berezovsky, carried the metaphor even further by depicting the Russian Army in Chechnya as a crucified Christ.[6]

The resurrection of the Russian military began during spring 1999. The rebirth involved a combination of international and domestic events, which brought in their aftermath renewed pride and importance for the Russian Armed Forces. Russia's inability to forestall NATO military intervention against Yugoslavia during the Kosovo crisis undermined the strategic posture of relying on strategic nuclear weapons to secure Russian political interests. Former Russian Minister of Defense Marshal Igor Sergeev made modernizing those forces and restructuring their command and control the capstone of his military reform program at the expense of Russia's conventional forces. The NATO air campaign over Yugoslavia served Sergeev's critics in two ways. First, it underscored the limits of strategic nuclear deterrence in defense of interests that were beyond Russia's immediate frontiers and

not perceived to demand capital engagement. Second, the air campaign's precision strikes raised the prospect of NATO applying a similar intervention strategy against the periphery of Russia.

The Russian public saw the NATO military intervention against Yugoslavia as morally wrong and as an indirect threat to Russia itself. Given the increasing likelihood of renewed hostilities in the Caucasus and NATO's growing interest in the region as a result of the emerging great game for access to oil and gas, a new military priority emerged: the ability to engage in theater deterrence. To many Russian observers, Kosovo marked the end of the post-cold war era and the beginning of a new period when local conflicts could turn into local wars with a very high risk of external military intervention against Russia.[7]

This article focuses on Russia's postmodern theater armed forces. Postmodern is used in this case as a military adapted to a postindustrial, information-dominated environment where the force is structured to conduct stability and support operations.[8] Such a force would negate many aspects of conventional mass armed forces even as the force took on a wide range of security functions associated with globalization. Some authors see such changes leading to the marginalization of military power.[9] Other authors have asserted that postmodern militaries will be primarily involved in intrastate conflicts as the probability of interstate warfare continues to decline. This article rejects the term "conventional forces" because it implies continuity and negates any emphasis on the impact of the revolution in military affairs (RMA) on the evolution of the forces of those services not connected to strategic or strategic nuclear forces. This position is quite different from Western RMA theorists who tend to see precision as a substitute for all-arms theater warfare and focus on developing advanced systems for aerospace warfare. Such capabilities will provide the United States with a global military hegemony even against potential peer competitors.

Lieutenant General Jay W. Kelley shares his vision: "In 2025 most major battles among advanced postindustrial societies may not be to capture territory. They may not even occur on the earth's surface. But if they do, armies and navies will deploy and maneuver with the privilege of air and space power. More than likely, the major battles among these societies will occur in space or cyberspace. Those who can control the flow of knowledge will be advantaged. It is not information itself which is important but the architecture of and infrastructure for its collection, processing, and distribution which will be critical. This is not to say that surface conflicts reminiscent of the slaughter by machetes in Rwanda will not continue in the future. They probably will. But the U.S. need not fight those adversaries in those places with those weapons—even when we must become involved.

"Whether or not there are any major competitors for the U.S., many competitors will be advantaged by time, capability, or circumstance. In the world of 2025, there will be a select few who can compete in some aspects at the highest levels of military technology. Others will have reasonable military capability—possessing modern technology to project power by land, sea, or air. But they will be unable to sustain high-tech combat for long."[10]

In the war against terrorism, a key issue is defining who the terrorists, terrorist organizations, and state sponsors of terrorism are. And that can be a complex political question that lies much in the eye of the beholder, especially when the issue moves from those immediately responsible for a specific attack to a more general terrorist threat. States and societies bring their own prisms to measuring and assessing terrorist threats.

The Russian perception on these issues for 2015 is in keeping with the description of a potential peer competitor. Russia is no longer a superpower, and it is quite unlikely that it will assume that status in the future. Russia is, however, a state seeking to regain international influence and power, and to assert its position as a great power. This is a goal that former Prime Minister Evgenyi Primakov articulated, President Vladimir Putin has confirmed, and Russia's political and military elite share. In a discussion of the threats facing Russia, President of the Academy of Military Sciences retired General Makhmut Gareev states: "One of such major unifying factors is the idea of the revival of Russia as a great power and not a regional [one], for she is arranged across several large regions of Eurasia, and is really great on a global scale."[11]

While the threat of general war and nuclear war appear remote prospects, the Russian political and military elite foresee a continuation of the current trend toward local war and armed conflicts on its own periphery. Gareev further notes that such threats primarily define Russian defense requirements. He identifies three primary threats: internal instability with the possibility of external intervention by powers hostile to Russia, nuclear proliferation, and NATO expansion. Gareev explains: "The first threat is the long-term policy of the leading

world powers, directed toward the deprivation of Russia's independence, the undermining of her from within, the terrorism that is connected to this [policy], the heating up of internal and adjacent conflicts from without, and what the President of the Russian Federation, V. Putin, has called the aspiration of some powers to domination in the world.

"The second and biggest threat is that the final destination of the nuclear weapons of practically all countries who have such weapons is against Russia; the danger of the proliferation of nuclear weapons.

"The third threat is the presence of powerful armed groupings across the entire perimeter of borders, their approach to Russia. In particular, as a result of expansion of the North Atlantic Alliance to the east its military potential has increased by 20-25%."[12]

At the same time, the decline in the Russian economy over the past decade and present demographic trends preclude maintaining a mass, industrial army. The RMA is expected to have the greatest impact on those forces intended to conduct theater warfare. They include ground, air, and naval forces committed to the theater and those strategic nuclear and space forces that would support the conduct of theater war and reduce the prospects for horizontal and vertical escalation.

As Russia's military and political leaders see the evolving geopolitical situation, such escalation can arise primarily from two strategic directions. One such threat would be from the West and would involve some United States-led coalition of forces, including other NATO members' armed forces, in some conflict on Russia's periphery, threatening Russia's vital interests. Another, in the more distant future, would involve possible military action by the People's Republic of China against the Russian Far East as a result of domestic weakness or a reorientation of Chinese policy toward creating a sphere of influence in that region.

Under Putin, managing these two threats is a matter of realpolitik such as engaging Europe to lessen American influence while avoiding open confrontation. The current cooperation policy with China gains international leverage against the United States and draws China into a cooperative security system for Central Asia. At the same time, the policy, which involves arms sales that will accelerate the modernization of China's armed forces, runs a grave risk in the mid to long term in case Russia's domestic political and economic situations prove unable to modernize Russia's own forces.

The emphasis in military planning and force structure transformation is on warfare fought in theaters on Russia's periphery where both the levels and imminence of threats define the exact wars the Russian Government expects to fight over the next 15 years. This approach is postmodern because the composition, structure, and organization of those forces negate the Soviet state's modern military force paradigm. Its features are closer in spirit and content to recent Western works devoted to conducting combined arms theater warfare.[13]

With some precision, one can date the beginning of the postmodern era in Russian national security policy and define the nature of those changes. The core event was NATO's intervention in Kosovo and the air campaign conducted against Yugoslavia during spring 1999. Up to 1999, one can argue that the dominant opinion within the Russian national security elite stressed a window of security that was expected to exist for the next decade or so.[14]

This window of security would guide Russian military reform with regard to its conventional forces. Over the near term, Russia's conventional forces could limit their preparations for local conflicts on the southern axis of instability. Over the midterm, which Deputy Chair, Defense Committee of the Duma, Aleksei Arbatov describes as the next 10 to 15 years, those forces should be prepared to deal with larger regional conflicts in the south. In the long term, or in the next 15 to 20 years, those forces should prepare for "regional or large-scale conflicts in the south and/or east."[15] This view provided the foundation for the Russian National Security Concept issued in 1997 that emphasized internal threats to Russian national security.[16] The events in Kosovo—NATO's decision to conduct military operations against Russia's advice and in the absence of a mandate from the United Nations (UN) Security Council—transformed the balance of political power within the Russian national security elite and bolstered the case for decisively using Russian military power on its own periphery, even in the face of possible external intervention by the West.[17] The implications of this development were quite profound for Russian national security policy in Eurasia.

Chief of the Russian General Staff General Anatoly Kvashnin warned on 15 November 1999 that Moscow sees the possibility that NATO may be willing to use force on the territory of the former Soviet Union, among other places: "Not only the growing military-political activity in the former Soviet Union but [also] the evident attempts to declare these regions a sphere of NATO security interests are alarming. Kosovo and Iraq were the first examples of NATO's growing readiness to use armed force, and one may therefore expect that other territories, including former Soviet territories, will be no exception."[18]

US Air Force

An F-16 from the 501st Fighter Squadron banks away from its wingman during the Kosovo air campaign, 3 May 1999.

Russia's inability to forestall NATO military intervention against Yugoslavia during the Kosovo crisis undermined the strategic posture of relying on strategic nuclear weapons to secure Russian political interests. . . . The air campaign's precision strikes raised the prospect of NATO applying a similar intervention strategy against the periphery of Russia.

The experience of the last decade of U.S.-led interventions in Iraq, Somalia, Haiti, Bosnia, Kosovo, and Macedonia confirms a desire for what might be called no-contact warfare in support of or in preparation for stability and support operations. The same experience suggests a high risk of miscalculation in applying no-contact warfare and an emerging set of countermeasures that can ameliorate the combat advantages of precision strikes in a protracted campaign.

Putin and the Utility of Military Force

Putin's rise to power corresponded with a radical deterioration of U.S.-Russian relations resulting from the NATO campaign against Yugoslavia during spring 1999. At that time, Putin served as Secretary of the Security Council and played a prominent role in the Russian response to that crisis. He oversaw a major recasting of Russian doctrine on nuclear first use. In June, he was one of the civilian leaders kept informed of the dash of Russian paratroopers from their bases with the Stabilization Forces to Pristina. During the same period, the Russian Armed Forces mounted its largest exercise in a decade, Zapad-99. This exercise had a distinctly anti-NATO cast and simulated employing nuclear forces to de-escalate a conflict using nuclear weapons first.

Putin played a prominent role during the incursion of Chechen rebels into Dagestan. Appointed prime minister as the crisis extended into Chechnya, Putin firmly supported a military solution to the crisis and backed the invasion and assault on Chechnya. In the aftermath of bombings within Russia, Putin spoke forcefully for destroying the Chechen bandits and terrorists. He rode his tough stand on Chechnya to victory for progovernment parties in the December Duma elections and his appointment as Yeltsin's successor. Putin punctuated his own electoral campaign for president with the armed forces' successful assault on Grozny.

Putin has been ruthless in his prosecution of the Chechen war as seen from the fiery destruction of Grozny, the continued counterterrorist operations against Chechen villages, and the brutality of the so-called filtration camps. Putin handed primary responsibility for the antiterrorist campaign to the Federal Security Service but still has not found a way to bring peace to Chechnya. Even as the Chechen war continues, he retains his popularity.

Putin made it very clear what he saw as Russia's position in the international order—cultivated relations with China as a counter to Western intervention on Russia's periphery. Outlining the weakness of the Russian economy and the reduced power of the state, he stressed the need to bring about domestic reforms that would strengthen the Russian state to impose order at home and respect abroad. As Yeltsin's appointed heir, Putin stressed the continuity of his presidency with the policies of Evgeniy

Primakov and Yuri Andropov. Putin takes pride in his connections with the security services and has sought his closest advisers from among those who also served in the former Soviet Committee for State Security (KGB). Putin, in short, has proven to be a state-builder and a risk-taker, calculating how various moves will support Russian state interests against the risks involved in following a particular policy line. Putin practices realpolitik. Restrained by a weak hand but willing to take serious risks when vital interests are at stake, Putin fully understands Russia's weaknesses and has sought ways to become an effective partner of the Bush administration where national interests coincide. But he is willing to act to protect Russian interests where he sees a serious threat.

Putin faced a serious problem in dealing with the new Bush administration; Washington did not see Moscow as a serious player in the new international system. From the new administration's perspective, it appeared to be an economic, political, and social basket case. During Putin's election campaign, U.S. President George W. Bush was highly critical of Russia. He denounced Moscow's actions in Chechnya as well as corruption in Russia and charged Viktor Chernomyrdin with stealing from Western loans to Russia. Shortly before his inauguration, Bush stated that in contrast to former President William J. Clinton, he would not work to make Russia more democratic. During a *New York Times* interview, Bush stated: "He has pledged to root out corruption. I think that's going to be a very important part, but it's his choice to make. That's the point I'm trying to make. It's hard for America to fashion Russia."[19]

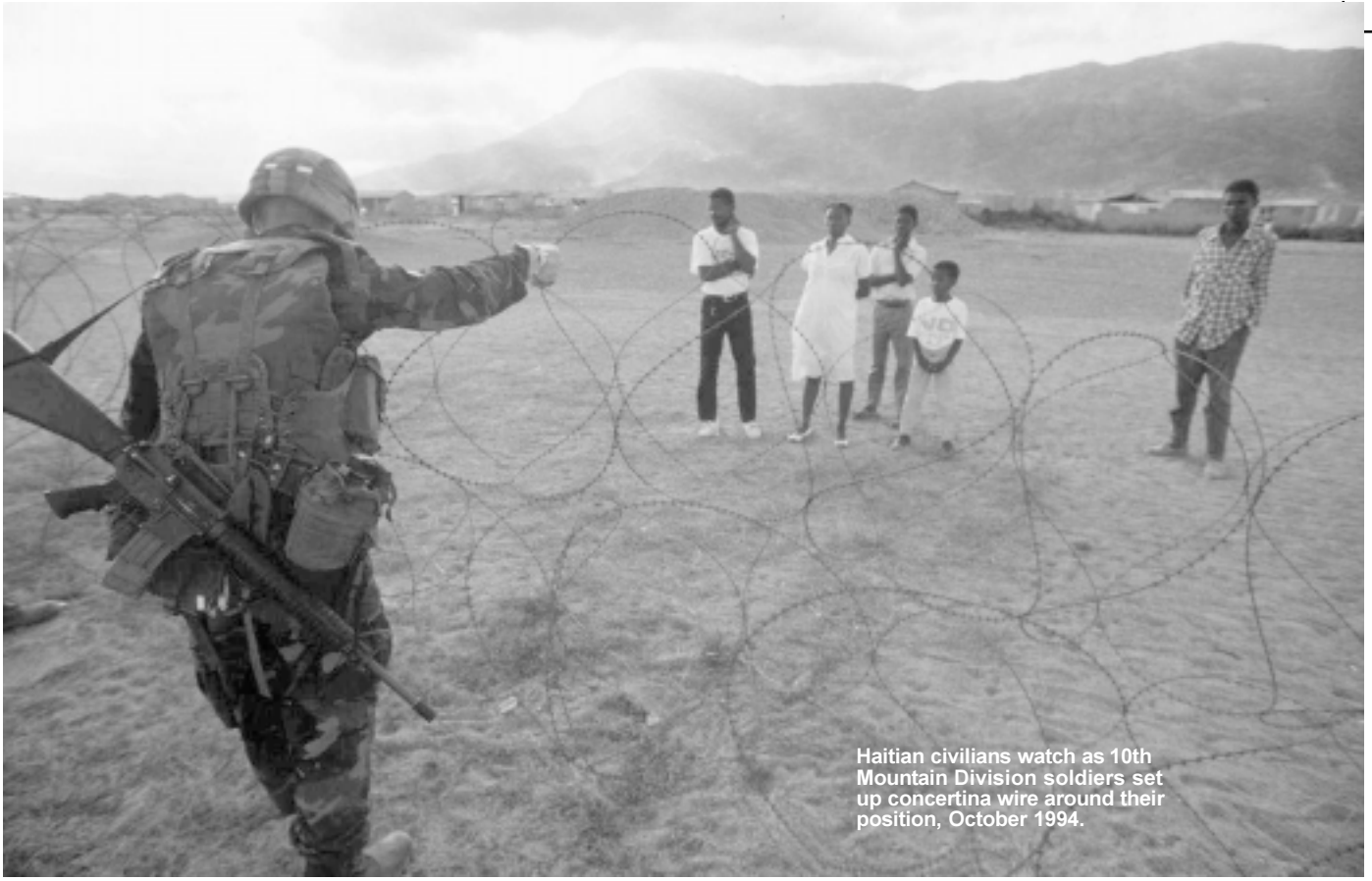
Whether Russia became a democracy was a Russian, not an American, problem. In contrast to the Clinton administration, Bush saw no need for a special relationship with Putin. The focus would be on normal state-to-state relations. The problem, however, was that, as Robert Kaiser pointed out, the administration had no policy toward Russia—we have been "posturing."[20] Before the summit held in Slovenia on 16 June 2001, it appeared to many observers, including Putin, that the Bush administration was not willing to engage Russia on critical bilateral issues such as NATO enlargement and national missile defense.

In the first half-year of the Bush administration, it appeared that neither side could find common grounds for addressing these issues. The conflict over the Bush administration's push for developing a national missile defense system and Putin's opposition to scrapping the Antiballistic Missile (ABM) Treaty did not lead to serious negotiations between the parties. Initial signals from Washington, DC, suggested that the new administration was quite willing to move ahead with its plans if Russia proved unwilling to accept national missile defense as a requirement of a new security environment that included efforts by rogue states to procure weapons of mass destruction and delivery systems. In no area was this conflict clearer than in Russia's policy of assisting Iran in nuclear projects and weapon procurement. The United States repeatedly warned Russia of the risks this policy ran for U.S.-Russian bilateral relations. Russian officials denied any existing threat to the international antiproliferation regime and categorized Iran as a stable partner on regional security issues. In December 1999, Sergeev visited Tehran for talks on further military cooperation and arms sales only a month after Putin renounced a 1995 pledge to sell only defensive armaments.[21]

The Bush administration's unilateralist policies and a growing crisis with China in the aftermath of the collision of a U.S. reconnaissance aircraft and a Chinese fighter gave Putin considerable room to maneuver. On national missile defense, he sought to adapt Russian policy to the concerns of West European governments, and he pursued closer relations with China in the Shanghai Five, an organization that proclaimed the ideological unity of its members against the threat of U.S. global hegemony, even as they deepened cooperation in the struggle against ethnic unrest and terrorism in Central Asia.

This situation changed, however, during the Bush-Putin summit held on 16 June 2001 in Slovenia. While substantive differences, such as NATO enlargement and national missile defense, remained unresolved, it was clear that the atmospherics between the two countries had improved considerably. Bush and Putin got along well with each other. Putin stated, "We found a good basis to start building on cooperation, counting on a pragmatic relationship between Russia and the United States." Bush stated, "I am convinced that he and I can build a relationship of mutual respect and candor."[22] Each man had come to Slovenia at the end of long journeys. Bush had visited Spain, Brussels, Sweden, and Poland where he addressed key issues of European security—NATO enlargement, U.S.-European Union relations, and the United States' commitment to continuing its engagement in the Balkans. Putin had traveled to China to attend the meeting of the Shanghai Five, which became the Shanghai Six, and address Sino-Russian cooperation on Eurasian security. U.S.-Russian relations appeared to be an important area for both administrations. Sergeev, now serving as a senior defense adviser to Putin, stated, "I consider this meeting as positive, and I

US Army



Haitian civilians watch as 10th Mountain Division soldiers set up concertina wire around their position, October 1994.

The experience of the last decade of U.S.-led interventions in Iraq, Somalia, Haiti, Bosnia, Kosovo, and Macedonia confirms a desire for what might be called no-contact warfare in support of or in preparation for stability and support operations. The same experience suggests a high risk of miscalculation in applying no-contact warfare and an emerging set of countermeasures that can ameliorate the combat advantages of precision strikes in a protracted campaign.

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believe that it will have long-term results."[23]

Whether this meeting would eventually lead to substantive improvements in U.S.-Russian relations remained unclear over the following summer. However, it appears that the first steps were positive and that Bush decided that it would be better to engage Putin wherever possible. On 18 June 2001, Putin announced to the U.S. media that a unilateral renunciation of the ABM Treaty could lead the Russian Government to consider acquiring new ballistic missiles with multiple independently targeted reentry vehicles.[24] With the Bush administration's review of defense policy still in progress and the Quadrennial Defense Review still awaiting completion, U.S.-Russian relations remained in political limbo in the key areas of defense and security policy as the summit ended. The Bush administration began to speak of forging a "new strategic framework" that would shape U.S.-Russian relations.[25] Russian Foreign Minister Igor Ivanov expressed Russia's willingness to discuss a new strategic framework on defense but within the context of clarifying U.S. intentions regarding national missile defense.[26]

However, on the eve of the terrorist attacks, the definition of the new strategic framework remained focused on the security legacy of the cold war. Anatol Lieven, a leading commentator on the post-cold war security environment, warned that U.S. strategic thinking, with its focus on the cold war legacy, retained a strong element of Russophobia.[27] Representative Curt Weldon, Republican, Pennsylvania, proposed a radical redefinition of the framework on 6 September 2001. "I want to create the most comprehensive package we can to engage Russia in a new way." Weldon noted that his proposal would include "sections devoted to the environment, education, business, finance, health care, the economy, agriculture and defense. . . . But defense isn't going to be the key because we have to convince the Russian people that we really care about being a long-term partner."[28] Less than a week later, the idea of a long-term partnership suddenly became more appealing to both the United States and Russia, and security policy had reasserted its importance but not in the context of continuing cold war rivalries. There now appeared to be some grounds for identifying a common enemy in international terrorism in its diverse manifestations.

The Bush administration began mobilizing the nation and forming a broad antiterrorist coalition.

Bush spoke of the struggle in his 20 September 2001 address to the joint session of Congress and the people: "Tonight we are a country awakened to danger and called to defend freedom. Our grief has turned to anger, and anger to resolution. Whether we bring our enemies to justice, or bring justice to our enemies, justice will be done."[29] In the face of what appears to be a protracted struggle with international terrorism, the United States faced the major challenge of turning international sympathy into building blocks of an antiterrorist coalition.

First Response to Terrorist Strikes

The events of mid-September brought into focus critical policy choices that went beyond initial consequence management, rescue, and recovery. As the Bush administration outlined the political goals and objectives of the newly declared war against terrorism, other states responded. Putin was the first head of state to reach Bush and express his condolences to him and the American people. On 12 September 2001, the Russian envoy voted for the UN Security Council's unanimous resolution, expressing its readiness to take all necessary steps to respond to the attacks in New York; Washington, DC; and Pennsylvania and any acts of terrorism, which it called "criminal and unjustifiable."[30]

At the same time, the Russian Government has been assessing the implications of the global situation for Russia. Given the attention of U.S. policy toward Osama bin Laden, the Taliban, and Afghanistan, the Russian Government began a series of conversations with the United States and others. At the meeting of the NATO-Russia Permanent Council on 13 September 2001, Russia joined as NATO condemned terrorism and pledged to act: "NATO and Russia are united in their resolve not to let those responsible for such an inhuman act go unpunished. . . . NATO and Russia call on the entire international community to unite in the struggle against terrorism."[31]

One week after the attacks, Putin was deep into bilateral consultation with Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) members from Central Asia. A critical theme of Russian conversations with the United States and West European and Central Asian states has been to define Russian national interests and to tailor a response to the current situation to enhance those interests. Facing militant Islam in the form of Wahabbism in its second Chechen war in the Caucasus and Taliban-supported insurrections in Central Asia, Russia was reeling from the assassination of its close ally, the military leader of the Northern Alliance, Ahmed Shab Masood. Masood died at the hands of two suicide bombers who claimed to be associated with *Arab International News* to gain access to the military commander. Exiled Afghan President Burhanuddin Rabbani said Masood's assassination was the work of "Pakistan, the Taliban and alleged terrorist Osama bin Laden."[32]

The Putin government faces difficult choices in responding to the developing global crisis. On 17 September 2001, Putin made an unscheduled trip to Sochi and telephoned the leaders of Azerbaijan, Turkmenistan, Ukraine, and Kazakhstan regarding the crisis. Other Russian officials expressed solidarity with the United States but left the issue of joint military operations open and focused their attention on the deteriorating situation in Northern Afghanistan. Foreign Minister Igor Ivanov spoke of U.S.-Russian solidarity in the struggle against international terrorism. But later that week, Defense Minister Sergei Ivanov stated that any joint Russian-NATO operation in Central Asia was purely speculation. S. Ivanov later announced that the Russian Army's 201st Division located near the Afghan border in Tajikistan was on high alert. The Russian Government began to show concern over imminent U.S. military operations against Afghanistan.

Emerging Debate Within the Russian Elite

The emerging debate reflected a fundamental conflict within the Russian elites' world view. On one side, the old hands in international relations and security policy viewed the crisis as one within the international system, understood the dynamics of the current crisis, and recognized the need to find some manner in which Russia could respond and protect its interests. Head of the Council of Defense and Foreign Policy Sergei Karaganov spoke of the need to join the coalition of industrial democracies in combating international terrorism. He called attention to the fact that India had already joined the coalition and that Russia faced possible isolation and loss of ability to influence events.[33] Arbatov, an expert on defense policy, noted the diplomatic security situation that was likely to lead Uzbekistan to support deploying U.S. forces to Central Asia. Arbatov went on to suggest that there were divisions in the Russian elite over joining the United States in any airstrikes against terrorists in Afghanistan.[34]

Retired Russian Army General-Colonel Boris Gromov, now Governor of Moscow Oblast, reflected on his long experience fighting in Afghanistan and emphasized the difficulties of conducting a campaign in such rugged terrain with its diverse and complex ethnic landscape. He warned against mounting any attacks against Afghanistan before the Taliban's implication in the terrorist acts could be established but called for Russian cooperation with the United States in diplomatic efforts and between

Eric Draper

Presidents Vladimir Putin and George W. Bush during a working lunch at the White House, 13 November 2001.

In the first half-year of the Bush administration, it appeared that neither side could find common ground. . . . This situation changed, however, during the Bush-Putin summit held on 16 June 2001 in Slovenia. While substantive differences, such as NATO enlargement and national missile defense, remained unresolved, it was clear that the atmospherics between the two countries had improved considerably. . . . Putin stated, "We found a good basis to start building on cooperation, counting on a pragmatic relationship between Russia and the United States."

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intelligence services. Russia would seek to avoid being a politico-military addendum to any military operations in what it considers its own sphere of influence in Central Asia.[35]

Member of the State Duma and former Secretary of the Security Council Andrei Kokoshin called the terrorist attacks "a threat to civilization" and warned that the world was already in a state of war. He anticipated subsequent military operations leading to a long-term NATO military presence in the immediate vicinity of Russia's borders. He recommended calling "a meeting of the heads of state from the five permanent members of the UN Security Council as a legitimate agency to tackle issues of such magnitude."[36] Russian public television anchorman Mikhail Leontyev summed up the bottom line among most of the Russian policy elite: "Russia should participate in the American actions proceeding exclusively from its national interest."[37]

The events of 11 September 2001 made this shift manifest by demonstrating what many had considered impossible—the United States' vulnerability to major terrorist attacks by an international terrorist network with its base of power not located in a rogue state but in a failing one being torn apart by civil war and collapsing economically. Major changes in threat perceptions, venues for security cooperation, and a new coalition of the willing became evident. Some commentators have seen these events and the ensuing changes as the beginning of "a bleak new world," an end of American optimism and the beginning of a new cold war. President of the Foreign Policy Research Institute Harvey Sicherman notes the importance of coalition-building in a war that would be global and irregular. Sicherman draws a distinction between rhetorical support and actually committing blood and treasure to the struggle.[38] In the war against terrorism, a key issue is defining who the terrorists, terrorist organizations, and state sponsors of terrorism are. And that can be a complex political question that lies much in the eye of the beholder, especially when the issue moves from those immediately responsible for a specific attack to a more general terrorist threat. States and societies bring their own prisms to measuring and assessing terrorist threats.

Eurasian Hostility to the United States

The second view that emerged among the Russian elite can best be described as conspiracy run

wild. Drawing its strength from nationalist/Communist opinion leaders close to the Putin administration, such opinions are reaching the Russian mass media. In his initial response to the atrocities, Aleksandr G. Dugin, leader of the Political Social Movement Eurasia, pointed toward greater freedom of action for Russia in solving the Chechen question: "Putin's hands are all but untied now. He can raze all of Chechnya to the ground and the international community will not say a word of protest. I don't think Russia should rush headlong into combating international terrorism and do away with the Chechen resistance. But it may happen all the same because the subject of valuing human rights is no longer pressing now."[39]

Subsequently, Dugin was one of those who presented 11 September as a U.S. plot to intervene in Central Asia against Russian interests. The recent terrorist incidents were provocations by U.S. intelligence services to initiate military operations against Afghanistan. This would be the first stage of conquering Central Asia and breaking Russia up. The quasi-logic here is ideological, conspiratorial, and geopolitical. Bin Laden, in this context, is still an agent of the Central Intelligence Agency, Saudi Intelligence, and Pakistani Intelligence. The "geopolitics of terror" are only an expression of the U.S. drive for global hegemony under the banners of globalism and Atlanticism. Dugin depicts the U.S. conspiracy as part of an ongoing struggle of the "golden billion" to oppress the other 5 billion people of the world. These actors speak of a conspiracy directed against Russia.[40] If Kokoshin talked about the world in a wartime situation, Dugin spoke of the United States preparing a war against Russia, a war that could involve using nuclear weapons. This is "America's war" against Russia.[41]

While these views are primarily presented on Dugin's diverse websites, he and his allies also have direct access to Russia's mass media. On 18 September 2001, Dugin joined Gleb Pavlovsky, head of the Foundation for Effective Politics and director of www.strana.ru on the web, and Geidar Dzhemal', chairman of the Islamic Committee and chief ideologue of pro-Russian Wahabbism. Dzhemal spoke of a conspiracy of Western intelligence services to mount the attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon and then blame bin Laden whom he described as an Ian Fleming-style villain a la the "evil billionaire Minister [sic] No—enemy of world civilization."[42] Dugin stuck to his geopolitical analysis and the threat that an American military campaign posed to Russia's very existence, self-evident according to his understanding of geopolitics. He drew a direct line from NATO's air campaign against Yugoslavia in 1999, through NATO's intervention last year in Macedonia, to the anticipated assault on Afghanistan and Russia's ultimate dismemberment.

Dugin presented this crisis as a serious threat of nuclear war. Pavlovsky, the guru of the Kremlin and a close ally of Dugin's in the past, spoke of the advent of new weapons of mass destruction, such as hijacked civilian airliners used for kamikaze attacks, and called them "weapons of a completely new type, comparable in their novelty and revolutionary impact with nuclear weapons."[43] Pavlovsky proposed that Russia join the struggle against terrorism but not against "Islamic terrorism" and recommended that Russia avoid war: "we must not come under the command of Mr. Bush, who has demonstrated, it seems, to the entire world his incompetence."[44] Divergent in their interpretations of the events, these Eurasianists advocated not supporting the United States in the present crisis for a variety of motives. Initially, military opinion, as expressed in the official Russian daily newspaper, *Krasnaya zvezda*, warned the United States "not to throw its military might around and seek to intimidate the rest of the world."[45]

Putin's Choices in a New Geostrategic Situation

Putin has been pragmatic in seeking to enhance Russian national interests. His relationship with Westerners and nationalists/Communists has been ambiguous. He has used both to his own ends without being captured by their programs. In his immediate response to the crisis, he sought to enhance Russian interests and attempted to define the struggle against terrorism in a manner that would allow Russia to deal with those he defined as terrorists in the Caucasus and Central Asia. Putin used the nationalists'/Communists' opposition as rationale for not directly cooperating with the United States in the theater of operations while he bargained for the political legitimacy of his claims and for military and political support for his own forces. The pace of developments, however, undermined Russia's ability to organize a diplomatic political response to military options. Putin's administration found itself responding to rapidly unfolding events.

Within a week of the terrorist attacks, the Russian media was full of reports on the unfolding U.S. military response. Operation Noble Eagle, as the Russian press misidentified the campaign in Afghanistan, was a subject of hot debate. Russian Internet media, *Katyusha*, reported on 16 September that forward elements of the U.S. Army's 82d and 101st Airborne Divisions had already deployed to Pakistan and were on their way to Peshawar, their base of operations. The account then described in

NATO

A NATO E-3 Sentry AWACS flies low along the U.S. border. Article 5 of the Washington Treaty was invoked not to bring American might to defend Europe but to mobilize the alliance to counter a direct threat attack on the United States.

The very war on terrorism has transformed alliance politics. Russia is engaged in the ad hoc coalition of the willing in Central Asia. Its arms and assistance to the Northern Alliance were critical to the campaign against the Taliban. Russia recast the politics of European security by joining NATO in invoking Article 5 of the Washington Treaty in circumstances unforeseen in the 1949 treaty—Europeans rallying to the United States' defense after it was attacked.

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some detail the upcoming ground campaign against bin Laden.[46] On 17 September, the "Information Telegraph Agency of Russia, ITAR-TASS," reported that the operation could begin within 2 days. *Krasnaya zvezda* provided an extensive exposition of U.S. force deployments under way to support Operation Noble Eagle. On 18 September, *Krasnaya zvezda* described Operation Noble Eagle as involving mass cruise missile attacks, followed by rocket and bomb attacks on terrorist bases in Afghanistan, and introducing Special Forces units to locate and eliminate bin Laden and his supporters. It speculated that the operation could start as early as 30 September.[47]

As these reports suggest, Russian leaders were confronting another unilateral U.S. military action adjacent to what it considered to be its sphere of influence. The impact of these events on Russian policy depended very much on the status of U.S.-Russian bilateral negotiations for cooperation. Unless terms could be negotiated in advance to keep the first front within acceptable bounds in terms of time, extent, collateral damage, and adverse effects on Russian interests in the region, the United States faced the prospect of Russian unilateralism—dealing with the Taliban on its own terms in Afghanistan. This unilateralism ranged from giving greater Russian support to the Northern Alliance, to attempting to isolate states of former Soviet Central Asia from the conflict, to disengaging and refusing to cooperate in other theaters of the war against terrorism and overt hostility. Just 2 weeks into the crisis, Putin took what one commentator has described as a "bold move."[48]

On 24 September 2001, in an address to the Russian people, Putin announced Russia's support for the war against terrorism. Labeling the attacks as being barbaric, Putin offered Russia membership in the antiterrorist coalition.[49] Putin stated that Russia had long called for a unified effort against international terrorism, had been battling it in Chechnya and Central Asia, and was now ready to actively participate in a multilateral coalition against it: "Russia has not changed its stance. Surely, we are willing now, too, to contribute to the anti-terror cause. As we see it, attention must turn primarily to enhancing the role of international institutions established to promote international security—the United Nations and its Security Council."[50] On specific cooperation in the Afghan theater of military actions, Putin pledged Russia's cooperation in five areas:

- Intelligence sharing among security services.
- Allowing air passage over Russian territory for humanitarian cargo to support antiterrorist operations.
- Using their good offices to secure access to airfields belonging to Russia's allies in Central Asia.
- Engaging Russian forces and facilities in

international search and rescue operations.

- Maintaining closer relations with and providing greater assistance to the Rabbani government and to Northern Alliance forces.

Putin put Minister of Defense S. Ivanov in charge of coordinating the intelligence sharing and practical cooperation with the antiterrorism coalition.[51] Stating Russian support for the antiterrorism coalition, Putin also addressed Chechnya in a manner that tied the two topics directly to one another: "As we see it, Chechen developments ought not to be regarded outside the context of efforts against international terrorism."[52] This statement was clearly a marker on the table.

Putin noted the historical peculiarities of the Chechen conflict that made it a distinct part of the struggle against terrorism and then appealed for the misguided and misinformed to lay down their arms: "That is why I call all paramilitaries and self-styled political activists urgently to sever whatever contacts with international terrorists and their organizations; and to contact official spokesmen of federal ruling bodies within 72 hours to debate the following: the disarmament procedure of the paramilitary groups and formations, and arrangements to involve them in peacetime developments in Chechnya. On behalf of federal authority, Victor Kazantsev, envoy plenipotentiary of the President of the Russian Federation to federal district South, which incorporates Chechnya, has been authorized to effect such contacts."[53] Putin went on to make it absolutely clear that Russia was not joining any anti-Islamic campaign and turned the question around, pointing out that he had met with Russia's Islamic leaders and that they had proposed organizing an international conference on "Islam Against Terror."[54]

The next day, Putin traveled to Berlin for an official state visit and addressed the Bundestag. Speaking first in German and then in Russian, Putin stressed the need for Europeans to lay aside cold war stereotypes to cooperate more effectively in the current crisis. He presented a vision of Russia as having been integrated into a new, united Europe. He used the events of 11 September to suggest that, as Russia had been proposing, the world was no longer bipolar but complicated.[55] Failure to build a new security system was the primary cause of those events—failing to read the emerging threats and to act collectively against them. Putin asserts: "I think we [politicians] are all to blame for this, in particular we, the politicians, to whom the ordinary citizens of our countries have entrusted their safety. And is it happening primarily because we still have not managed to recognize the changes that have happened in the world over the past 10 years? We continue to live in the old system of values. We speak of a partnership, but, in reality, we still have not yet learned to trust one another. Despite all the sweet talk, we secretly still resist. Sometimes we demand loyalty with NATO, sometimes we quarrel about the purpose of its enlargement. We still cannot agree on the problems of the missile defense system, and so on and so forth."[56]

Putin called for the adaptation of post-cold war security structures to meet new threats and put the events of 1999 in Dagestan, Russia, and Chechnya in the context of the global struggle against terrorism. Russia had seen that evil and knew what it took to fight it. Addressing the role that Russia and the other CIS countries play in opposing the advance of drugs, crime, and fundamentalism from Central Asia, Putin embraced the campaign against terrorism: "Of course, evil should be punished—I agree with that. However, we must understand that no retaliation can be a substitute for a comprehensive, purposeful, and well-coordinated struggle against terrorism. In this respect, I fully agree with the U.S. President."[57] Russian spokesmen were quick to point out that Putin's move toward the West was not surrender to pressure or a case of diplomatic band wagoning. As Sergei Butin, an adviser on foreign affairs to the State Duma, pointed out: "This is not a question of our president yielding to the West. . . . This is our national interest. Both sides face the same enemy, the same threats."[58]

Putin did not confine his response just to the venues of the war on terrorism. In mid-October, Putin announced the closing of the electronic intelligence facility at Lourdes, Cuba, and withdrawal from the naval base at Cam Ranh Bay, Vietnam.[59] Coming on the eve of the Shanghai Summit of the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation Council, the announcement provided a context of cooperation that included negating cold war verities. While there was less debate over the wisdom of abandoning Cam Ranh Bay, the decision to abandon Lourdes provoked an intense debate in Moscow. Communists and nationalists joined former intelligence experts and soldiers in criticizing the decision to give up Lourdes.[60] Putin's former military allies, notably retired Russian Army Colonel-General Leonid Ivashov, spoke of abandoning the base as a geopolitical disaster for Russia and as a surrender to the United States.[61] Ivashov cast the decision as political opportunism devoid of geostrategic direction: "Unfortunately, in Russia there is a geopolitical doctrine, but there is no discernible pattern of geopolitical conduct."[62]

Commentators warned that Putin's pro-Western course ran the risk of mobilizing a Fabian resistance, one that would avoid a direct confrontation but would seek by sabotage, delay, and obfuscation to undermine the president's policy over time.[63] More

DOD

Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld escorts Afghanistan's interim leader Hamid Karzai into the Pentagon to discuss bilateral security issues, 28 January 2002.

***Krasnaya zvezda** described Operation Noble Eagle as involving mass cruise missile attacks, followed by rocket and bomb attacks on terrorist bases in Afghanistan, and introducing Special Forces units to locate and eliminate bin Laden and his supporters. It speculated that the operation could start as early as 30 September. As [this suggests], Russian leaders were confronting another unilateral U.S. military action adjacent to what it considered to be its sphere of influence.*

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recently, Putin's critics have been more direct in their attacks on his support for the antiterrorism alliance. Ivashov called Putin's move toward the West in the wake of 11 September and the war on terrorism a means to further expand American global power at Russia's expense in Central Asia: "Today a pretext for them appeared, and they have come there. And they have come to stay for a long time, if not forever."[64]

Other Communist-nationalist critics warned of Russia's geostrategic encirclement in the aftermath of the Afghan campaign.[65] Dugin, whose web pages carried Ivashov's criticism of the Putin administration, joined Putin's opponents and criticized the president for abandoning Eurasianism for Atlanticism. In the wake of the Bush-Putin summit in November 2001, Dugin spoke of "the perspective of civil war in Russia" and warned that the internal enemy had captured Putin. "He is absolutely weak. Now the problem of rescuing Russia is the problem of rescuing the president from this irresponsible, pro-Western, atlantist (sic) elite." He went on to warn Russian patriots to "be prepared for the worst."[66]

In the face of this criticism, Putin and his administration have remained solid in their antiterrorist orientation. In Russia's traditional New Year's Eve address to the nation, Putin underscored the economic gains that Russia had made in 2001 and noted Russia's enhanced position in the world as a result of its support for the antiterrorist coalition: "The world has come to view Russia with great trust and respect. It became apparent that Russia's consistent fight against terrorism was predicated not only on our national interests but a global danger."[67] More recently, U.S. National Security Adviser Condoleezza Rice stressed the positive nature of the U.S.-Russian cooperation against global terrorism.[68]

Because the struggle against terrorism is global, strains in U.S.-Russian cooperation can be expected. As U.S. Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld has repeatedly stated, the war on terrorism will involve more terrorist strikes and a protracted struggle across many theaters.[69] In his State of the Union Address in late January 2002, Bush extended the war on terrorism to include an "axis of evil" composed of Iraq, Iran, and North Korea, states the administration accused of seeking to acquire weapons of mass destruction: "By seeking weapons of mass destruction, these regimes pose a grave and growing danger. They could provide these arms to terrorists, giving them the means to match their hatred. They could attack our allies or attempt to blackmail the United States. In any of these cases, the price of

indifference would be catastrophic."[70]

While the United States has tried to enlist Russia in its campaign to get these states to abandon their programs to acquire weapons of mass destruction and delivery systems, Russia has had a radically different approach to all three states.[71] The dispute came to light at the European Security Conference in Munich in early February 2002. U.S. Deputy Secretary of Defense Paul Wolfowitz warned that the United States would hold the states composing Bush's axis of evil accountable for their support of terrorism. Minister of Defense S. Ivanov responded that Russia did not consider Iran to be connected to terrorism; Russia has its own list of states sponsoring terrorism, including Saudi Arabia and the Gulf States.[72]

As the United States and Russia contemplate their distinct roles in the war on terrorism, we may expect a protracted dialogue over the nature of this conflict, the roles particular states may play, and the further direction of our cooperation. It may be advisable to engage in doctrinal discussions regarding the military art that will be employed to defeat terror and insurgency in the Caucasus, Central Asia, and other potential theaters. Some Russian analysts claim that U.S. military intervention in Central Asia is but a first step to a permanent presence at the expense of Russian interests in association with a revived "great game" over oil, gas, and pipelines in the Caucasus, Caspian, and Central Asia. Such interpretations rest on a basic assumption of a zero-sum game of influence and power in these regions without addressing the fundamental causes of terrorism.

While Putin's domestic and foreign policies remain popular with Russians, he faces sustained criticism on his foreign and security policies. In this context, it is important to be mindful of the mid- and long-term environments in which he is functioning. His bold move was based on a long-range calculation of Russia's need for peace and stability to carry out its own recovery. The current economic revival owes much to the sudden rise in energy prices, which may not continue. The actual situations confronting Russia's economy and society are desperate, interconnected crises that cannot be quickly or easily solved. Some experts saw the collapse of electric power and centralized heating systems in the Far East last winter as a harbinger of a larger infrastructure crisis that could culminate in a nationwide crisis in 2003. Moscow has become a prosperous, cosmopolitan city where 5 percent of Russia's population produces 30 percent of the gross domestic product. But other regions, especially the far north and Far East, confront infrastructure collapse, declining populations, and increased environmental risks.

Russian public health is in a state of near collapse. Russian demographics for the past decade show a 3.5-million net decline in population to 145 million in July 2001, even with immigration from former Soviet republics. Projections of population decline over the next few decades are even starker, with optimistic estimates and projections calling for a decline to 122 million by 2025 and pessimistic assessments looking to a steeper decline to under 100 million.[73]

Putin's campaign for internal order, stronger institutions, and restored great power status fits well within the framework of Russian national traditions when confronted by a time of troubles. But it remains to be seen whether these traditional answers will be effective in addressing the long-term crisis within Russia. The most certain guarantee of successful reform within Russia is a stable international environment and mitigating any challenges to Russian vital interests.

Putin's overture to the United States in the war against terrorism is solidly grounded in several key assumptions. First, Russia and the United States now face common enemies in the initial round of the struggle against terrorism in bin Laden, the al-Qaeda, and the Taliban. Military and political cooperation in these areas is mutually beneficial. Second, in the Caucasus, terrorism and Islamic extremism provide an international legitimacy to Russia's own war in Chechnya, even as it offers grounds for seeking negotiations with Chechen nationalists such as President Aslan Maskhadov. Finally, the long-term struggle with terrorism justifies Putin's domestic stance for a strong central state. In this context, several salient international issues appear in a very different light.

The war on terrorism radically reduces the risks of U.S. unilateralism in abruptly abandoning the ABM Treaty. As the Bush and Putin administrations prepare for a bilateral meeting in St. Petersburg during spring 2002, both sides are presenting draft position papers on strategic arms reductions and the fate of the ABM Treaty and national missile defense. Russia and the United States have common reasons to seek to defuse this issue by some diplomatic device. The risk of rogue states acquiring weapons of mass destruction capabilities underscores the need for cooperation on counterproliferation and defensive measures. On NATO expansion, the very war on terrorism has transformed alliance politics. Russia is engaged in the ad hoc coalition of the willing in Central Asia. Its arms and assistance to the Northern Alliance were critical to the campaign against the Taliban. Russia recast the politics of European security by joining NATO in invoking Article 5 of the Washington Treaty in circumstances unforeseen in the 1949 treaty—Europeans rallying to the United States' defense after it was attacked. Whether this arrangement survives further tectonic shifts in the international environment remains unclear. But for now Russia and the

United States are bound in a common struggle with a global threat.

Dealing with Putin's Russia may not have been the core concern of the Bush administration during its first month in office. By summer 2001, it was quite clear that U.S.-Russian discussions on a new strategic framework were important to both sides. After the events of 11 September, the nature of the challenges before both states became quite clear. A perception of common enemies provided a vital context for a new, post-cold war strategic framework. ***MR***

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Jacob W. Kipp is a senior analyst with the Foreign Military Studies Office, Fort Leavenworth, Kansas. He graduated from Shippensburg State College and received a Ph.D. from Pennsylvania State University. He has been published extensively in the fields of Russian and Soviet military history and serves as the American editor of the journal, European Security. *He is an adjunct professor of history with the University of Kansas and teaches in the Soviet and European Studies Program. His article "The Fog and Friction of Technology" appeared in the September-October 2001 issue of* Military Review.